

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-14 (Canceled).

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 38, wherein the at least one oxidative stress factor is selected from the group consisting of IL-1, IL-6, IL-8, 8-isoprostaglandin, vascular cell adhesion molecule, and intracellular adhesion molecule.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 38, wherein the at least one oxidative stress is a reactive oxygen species.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 38, wherein the at least one oxidative stress factor is produced by at least one member selected from the group consisting of monocytes and lymphocytes.

Claims 18-21 (Canceled).

Claim 22 (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 38, wherein the mammal in need thereof has at least one inflammatory disease or symptoms thereof.

Claim 23 (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 22, wherein the at least one inflammatory disease is selected from the group consisting of atherosclerosis, rheumatic disease, and psoriasis.

Claims 24-28 (Canceled).

Claim 29 (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 39, wherein the mammal in need thereof has at least one inflammatory disease or symptoms thereof.

Claim 30 (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 29, wherein the at least one inflammatory disease is selected from the group consisting of atherosclerosis, rheumatic disease, and psoriasis.

Claims 31-35 (Canceled).

Claim 36 (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 40, wherein the mammal in need thereof has at least one inflammatory disease or symptoms thereof.

Claim 37 (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 36, wherein the at least one inflammatory disease is selected from the group consisting of atherosclerosis, rheumatic disease, and psoriasis.

Claim 38 (Previously Presented): A method of reducing a level of at least one oxidative stress factor in the blood of a mammal, comprising administering to a mammal in need thereof *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v, wherein the level of the at least one oxidative stress factor is reduced compared to the level of the at least one oxidative stress factor in the absence of *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v and the *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v is administered to the mammal in need thereof in at least 25 mL/day of oatmeal gruel comprising at least 1×10^9 CFU/mL of *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v for a time period of from 3 to 6 weeks.

Claim 39 (Previously Presented): A method of increasing a level of the fecal concentration of propionic acid in a mammal, comprising administering to a mammal in need thereof *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v, wherein the level of the fecal concentration of propionic acid is increased compared to the level of the fecal concentration of propionic acid in the absence of *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v and the *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v is administered to the mammal in need thereof in at least 25 mL/day of oatmeal gruel comprising at least 1×10^9 CFU/mL of *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v for a time period of from 3 to 6 weeks.

Claim 40 (Currently Amended): A method of reducing a level of adhesion of monocytes to endothelial cells in a mammal, comprising administering to a mammal in need thereof *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v, wherein the level of adhesion of monocytes to endothelial cells is reduced compared to the level of adhesion of monocytes to endothelial cells in the absence of *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v and the *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v is administered to the mammal in need thereof in at least 25 mL/day of oatmeal gruel comprising at least 1×10^9 CFU/mL of *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v for a time period of from 3 to 6 weeks.

Claims 41-49 (Canceled).

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Reply to Final Office Action dated April 13, 2004

DISCUSSION OF THE AMENDMENT

Claims 44-49 have each been canceled.

No new matter is believed to have been added by the above amendment. With entry thereof, Claims 15-17, 22-23, 29-30, and 36-40 will be pending in the application.